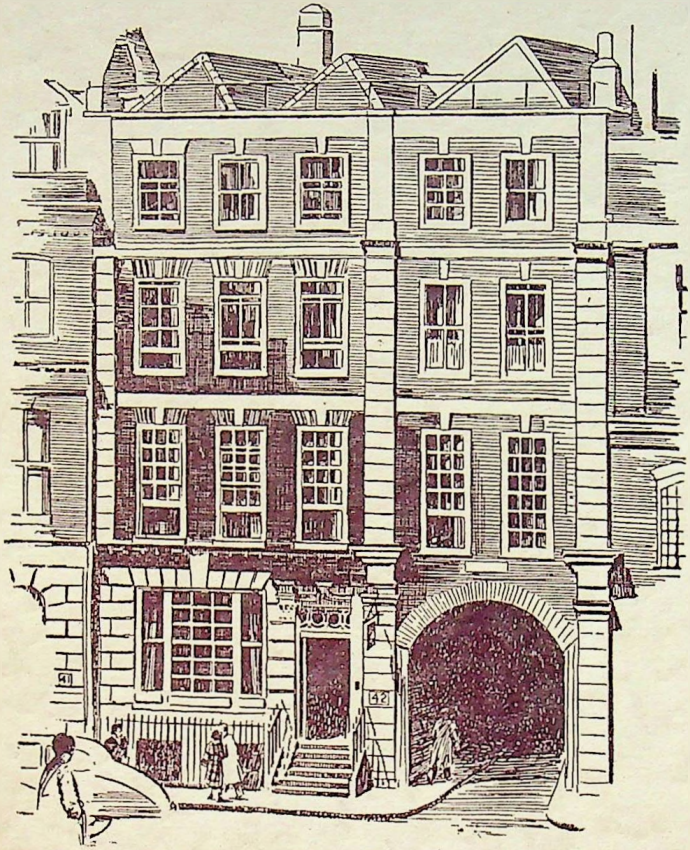
THE LOG

Toc H Women's Association



CRUTCHED FRIARS HOUSE. Headquarters of Toc H Women's Association

SEPTEMBER, 1953 NINEPENCE

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THE LOG

VOL. XXVII ∴ NO. 5 SEPTEMBER 1953

A NEW DRESS is said to do wonderful things for feminine morale, and we have been thinking rather wistfully that a new cover might have the same encouraging effect upon the Log. Probably some readers, like some husbands, will deplore the change and sigh for the old blue garment which once clothed their beloved; others—like other husbands—will scarcely notice there has been a change; but we hope that at least a few may like it and be wooed to a fresh interest in the contents.

The portrait of our London home which decorates the front was specially drawn for "Mac" about a year ago, and is available as a post card for the sum of fivepence.

Of course a new dress is the thin edge of a wedge, and often underlines our need for a new foundation garment, as the advertisements so pleasantly call our supports. Just so the Log, we feel, can never appear in true and comely form until it is braced with fuller and more worthy 'news'. Here we are admittedly faced with special difficulties, for Toc H has not necessarily the kind of programme which can be chronicled. The four hundred and eighty-odd Branches of our Women's Association are without doubt fully engaged in working out among their members and their outside contacts the kind of relationship which Toc H exists to foster; but it must often be very difficult to see what account of their endeavours they can give the Log.

We have every sympathy with what lies behind the disappointing quality of much of our Family News—and disappointing indeed it very often is—but that is a weakness in the Log we feel sure can be overcome if all concerned will give it a little thought.

Birthdays and Rededications, for instance, are significant and satisfying occasions to the people taking part, but—let us face it, as it has become fashionable to say—they make unstimulating reading to the friend or stranger curious to discover what business we are about.

It is *life* with our Toc H slant we want to read about—our work and friendships, not the slant itself; and though most jobs are not spectacular, all must yield interesting experiences if they are performed with love; and all make good reading if they are written of with enjoyment.

And may we not hear about the people who are being helped, and share in the friendship, humour and humanity our mem-

bers must encounter in the helping? In such a way we could all enlarge our circle of friends, and enhance immeasurably our interest in one another and in them. And in such a way the Log could emerge, reclothed and in a livelier mind.

ED.

Michaelmas, 1953

All branches will have received, some weeks ago, a letter reminding them of our great undertaking at Michaelmas, as well as a copy of the intercession paper to be used. By now we hope that this leaflet is in the hands of the membership as a whole.

Here are some thoughts which may help us all to realise the importance of this corporate venture in prayer, and to prepare for it.

1 This is Coronation year: we have been drawn together as never before in one world-wide fellowship. We have heard the voices of eminent leaders from all parts of the Commonwealth speaking, on behalf of their people, of their devotion to the Throne. We have heard them speaking of their political, social, and economic problems, of their hopes and fears about these great challenges to our generation.

All this should enable us to pray with more understanding and sympathy than ever before, in the knowledge that we are brothers and sisters in one great family, of whom our Queen is the beloved Sovereign. Let us pray together for the Commonwealth especially and for the contribution which Toc H can and should make towards the building up of Christian principles into habits of life.

2 We hope that, as usual, every member will devote a period of the day to prayer. It might be possible to divide the time into three parts: (a) for the intercessions and thanksgivings on page 1; (b) for intercessions for one (or two) countries of the Commonwealth; (c) for the work of Toc H. Thus our prayers will girdle the world and be comprehensive in outlook.

3 As well as the individual prayers of the members of the branch, which we hope will make a chain of prayer throughout the day, a branch may be able to take part in a group activity in the evening, using the intercession paper *together*. No doubt branch padres will be ready to help, either in preparation, or on the day itself.

There will be, as usual, a service at All Hallows at 7 p.m. for any London members who can come. We shall miss Mac at All Hallows this year, but we may be sure she will be taking a full-time part on Michaelmas Day, wherever she may be.

4 We know that our thoughts can leap round the world to reach the minds of others. Prayer is the activity of the mind in which we try to think of God, to desire that His will may be done, and His purpose fulfilled. We, as it were, tune in to God in prayer, trying to think as He does and to co-operate with Him.

When we bring our thoughts into harmony with God's thoughts says a modern writer, 'we allow God's power to work through us . . . When we receive God into our minds, we take Him into our lives.' So when we pray for the world in general, or for particular things or people, we do not so much need to pray that God will help, as to tune in to His love for all men and His desire that they may know and do His will. Our prayers may thus become a channel through which God's creative life may reach those for whom we pray. Our best prayers are those in which our thoughts are centred on God's love and power. Then as we pray *in faith*, believing and accepting that love and praying that His will may be done, we 'make room' for the fulfilment of His will in this particular circumstance.

Effective prayer indeed depends upon right thinking about God. It is in our thoughts that we can meet with God, as we try to enter into His loving purpose for all men. If we want words in which to express our thoughts, one of the best prayers for others is to be found in the first chapter of S. Paul's letter to the Collossians vs. 9-15. Or, the Lord's own prayer can be used with each intercession.

If these thoughts help us to realise the great opportunity which is given to us at Michaelmas; to plan with a will to use it to the best of our ability, we may not only help to further the purposes of God, but also discover for ourselves afresh the deep satisfaction which comes from any attempt to enter into the Mind of God.

MARIANNE TURNER.

WE WILL REMEMBER

CLARA BARNES, *Chippenham* (1944):	May, 1953
'DIXIE' COUSINS, *Richmond* (1953):	May, 1953
PHYLLIS JELLEY, *Coventry* (1930):	April, 1953
M. OWEN, *Corsham* (1945):	August, 1953
F. A. PALMER, *Portishead* (1945):	January, 1953
RUBY YOUNG, *Adelaide, Australia* (1934):	April, 1953

HONG KONG PICTURE

HONG KONG is an exquisite little island, with its grand hills, on fine days affording fairy-like glimpses of sunny beaches, brilliant blue stretches of sea, dotted with islands of every shape and size. Sunset is a fine sight, when thousands of fishing junks come sailing home, their brown or yellow sails billowing in the breeze. The fisherfolk are a well-built people, their muscular bodies burnt to a nut-brown colour. Whole families dwell on these junks, with a strange collection of livestock, dogs, cats, chickens and ducks.

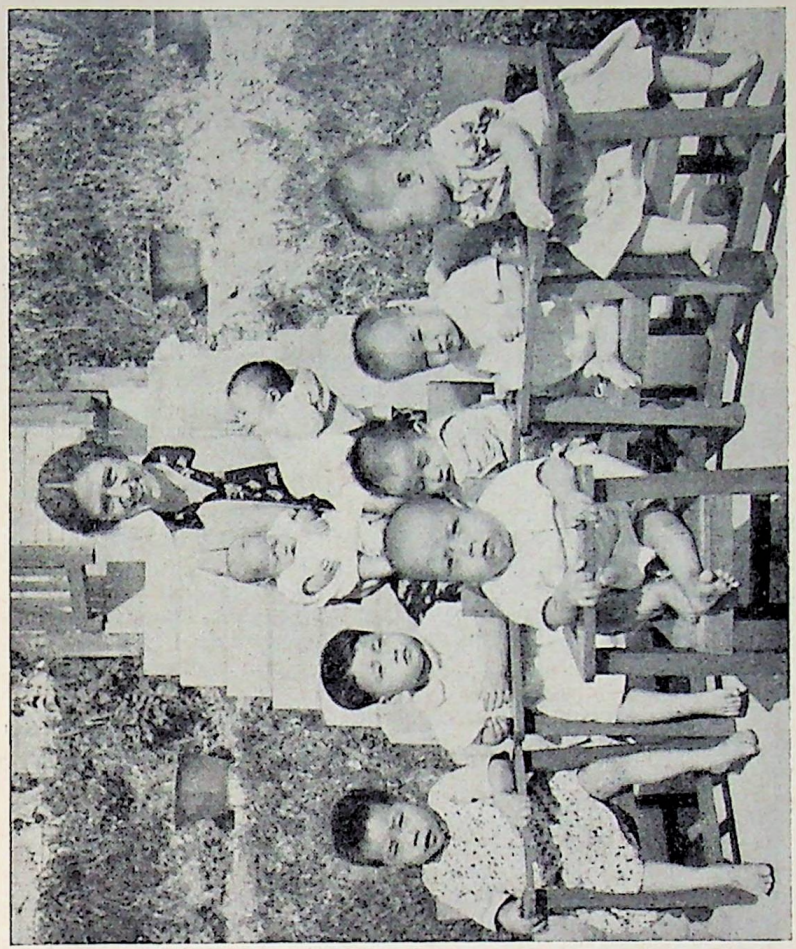
In an area of approximately 400 sq. miles, the population has swollen to well over two million, ninety-eight per cent of them Chinese. Most of these are living in the towns of Victoria and Kowloon, though thousands exist in congested squatter colonies, where they have built themselves rough shacks of odd scraps of timber or sacking.

Great work has been done to rehabilitate these refugees from China. Whole areas are cleared, and the people moved to approved sites. It is an endless job; hardship and suffering continue. Conditions in the towns are bad too. Accommodation is difficult to find. Large families live together in tiny cubicles, or 'bed spaces', for which they pay high rentals. Ventilation and sanitation are often bad. Narrow stairways in buildings of several storeys are highly dangerous from the point of view of fire. T.B. is a serious problem, and it is to be hoped that the new scheme of inoculation will help to reduce the numbers of tuberculosis sufferers.

There are a great many organisations working to alleviate the suffering among the poor in this crowded Colony. Food kitchens, temporary shelters and clinics have been opened to assist the homeless and the destitute.

With so much work to be done our Women's Association may seem a very small thing, and the work that we do a mere drop in an enormous ocean. Our chief interest is a home for utterly destitute Chinese babies, started recently by a very brave and wonderful woman, whose faith in God has carried her through many a trial. These babies when they first come to the Home, are pathetic little objects, abandoned by the roadside, or on the hills, and often more dead than alive. Most of them are girl babies, because boys are valued much more highly by the Chinese. Miss Dibden takes them in, and nurses them with all the love and care a baby should have. It is a real home, she is their mother, and they are brought up in a true Christian way of life. We try to help, making cot blankets and clothing, and collecting old clothes. It is a very worth-while cause, and we wish we could do more to help.

A Hong Kong Member.



MISS MILDRED DIBDEN WITH HER ORPHANED BABIES
AT PING SHAN, NEW TERRITORIES

Ourselves—and the Young Delinquent

This year's Central Council of the Women's Association was memorable for more than one of its discussions, and those who were present may recall with particular interest a proposition submitted by Mrs. Sawbridge, wife of Padre H. Sawbridge of Toc H Western Area.

We are glad to be able to reproduce here a good part of her speech and of the address given on the same subject by Mr. G. Morley Jacob, J.P. (General Secretary of the London Police Court Mission). To these are added a letter written to Mrs. Sawbridge by Alec Churcher, Schools and Services Secretary of Toc H.

The proposition was as follows:

That the problem of juvenile crime and delinquency be seriously studied by Branches of Toc H Women's Association throughout the country, with a view to thinking out:

(a) In what ways we as Christians have failed in our responsibility towards the children of our country, and how we can set about redeeming this failure; and

(b) What practical help could we give, for example to young people on probation and in Approved Schools, and also to those individuals and bodies who are concerned with the religious education of adolescents?

MRS. SAWBRIDGE.

This was never intended to be a talk on Juvenile Delinquency because I am in no way qualified to speak on that subject. I am a mere ignorant member of the general public who nevertheless feels that here is a subject which concerns us all, and which ought to be giving us (to use a phrase which used to be current in Toc H and is, I think, a good phrase)—a "pain in the soul".

I feel very strongly that we ought all to recognize our share of responsibility for the state of affairs that exists. I have said that 'I am a mere ignorant member of the general public'. That in itself is a reproach to me, and to all like me. We *are* ignorant, and we ought not to be, of so many things that go to the making of the sort of society in which we live. How ignorant we are, really, for the most part, even of what sort of a society it is! How much do most of us know, for instance, about the conditions in which the majority of the boys and girls who come up before the Courts live; the sort of homes from which they come and the mental outlook of those among whom they grow up? It is a shocking revelation to most of us when we first begin to find out some of these facts. But if we are to be of any help to these young people we have got to know and understand their background. As a Youth Service Officer whom I recently heard speak said, 'We have got to make a beginning with the child where *he is*. It is no use trying to take

a child from where he isn't to somewhere that he doesn't want to be!'

So that, it seems to me, will have to be the beginning of our endeavour: to learn more about the background of these children's lives, and the causes which give rise to their behaviour. A boy or girl does not, as a rule, just suddenly commit crimes or acts of violence or lawlessness; he does not overnight change from being an ordinary, decently behaved child—in so far as ordinary children can be said to be 'decently behaved'!—to being a young criminal or offender. No, he does these things because he has become *that sort* of person. And it is we, the people of this so-called Christian country, who have allowed him to become that sort of person.

The late Father Andrew in one of his marvellous letters pointed out that in the Parables of the Lost Things Our Lord showed three kinds of 'lostness': the sheep that was lost through its own sheer silliness; the coin that was lost through material circumstances, and the son who was lost through wilfulness. And Our Lord showed what we must do for each of these three: we must go out and seek the sheep that has gone astray; we must bring light into the dark place where the coin lies, and sweep away the dirt that hides it; we must, when all else fails, await the return of the Prodigal with forgiveness and welcome, and go out to meet him at the first sign of his returning.

To translate these thoughts into terms of practical action, what of the strayed sheep? How often is the notoriously 'bad boy' or girl not only not sought out, but deliberately barred from some Youth organization? He would be too troublesome, too much of a problem, a bad influence. How many of us are willing to go and help in the sort of Youth Centre—which does exist in some of our worst areas—where the boys who come in have to be searched for knives and razor blades and knuckle-dusters, and who refuse to give their names in case the Club Leader may be 'in with the Police'? Yet these boys do at least come to the Club. What of their friends and associates and the girls who are their counterparts, who are spending their evenings in no such reputable place? Are we seeking them out?

We are told that Our Lord looked with compassion on the multitude because they were as sheep having no shepherd. There were not then, and there are not now, enough shepherds to go round. Talk to any Youth Service Officer, Guide Commissioner, Scout Master, Girls' or Boys' Club Leader, and you hear the same story on all sides: the desperate need for voluntary helpers and leaders, the difficulty of getting the *right* sort of person to offer himself or herself for the work. Surely there is an enormous field of service to young people open to our membership—active service, since I trust we are not like the man who was heard to pray: 'Lord use me—but in an advisory ca-

pacity'. The lack of interest on the part of the general public, even of the parents of the children whom Youth Leaders seek to serve, is, I am told, one of the most disheartening aspects of the work of Youth Leaders of every sort.

Another form of service open to some of us is suggested to me by a letter I have recently had from Mr. Alec Churcher, the Schools and Services Secretary of Toc H, a part of which I should like to read to you. He speaks of visiting Borstal Institutions, and says:

'A major problem at almost all of these is the question of "home leave" for boys who either have no homes or whose homes are not of the kind to which they can be encouraged to return.

'It is part of the system for boys at some time during the last few months of their "training" to be allowed a long week-end of home leave. The object of this is to enable them to begin to readjust themselves to a non-institutional form of life and perhaps to begin making practical plans (such as finding a job) for the new start it is hoped they will make on discharge. Where there is no home to go to, the After-Care Association tries to find a family willing to take an interest in the boy, who will be prepared to invite him to stay in their home during his leave, and will continue to befriend him after discharge. It is here that Toc H is sometimes able to help, and lately there have been several instances where the scheme has worked very well indeed . . .

'On my visits to Borstal Institutions I have been sometimes able to meet and talk with some of these "homeless" lads and the most saddening thing about them is their complete rootlessness. There are, all too often, no ties of either affection or kinship to hold them to any other inhabitant of the planet, and this feeling of not belonging is, I believe, the main cause of their delinquency. There is a great need therefore for more Toc H homes to be open in this way, and married members of the Women's Association as well as married men Toc H members could, if they are prepared to do so, make a quite invaluable contribution in this way to the problem of these boys. It is, of course, asking a great deal of them, for the job is not an easy one, but it is one that I do not think we should shirk.'

That is one suggestion. There are, I understand, in at least some large towns, groups of people organized by the Borstal After-Care Committee who concern themselves with boys and girls who have left a Borstal Institution and are living in lodgings or at their work—people who make friends with these boys and girls and keep in touch with them. Again, the Headmaster of an Approved School in my part of the country told a group of us who visited his school that he was very anxious to have more people who would adopt a boy in the school—(not legally,

of course, but in a friendly capacity)—who had perhaps no other friends or relations to write to him; to take him out for the day when this was allowed, to send him a card on his birthday—to do all those little things the lack of which makes such a boy feel unhappily conscious of his difference from other boys.

One way in which it was suggested that such an atmosphere the Magistrates of a Juvenile Court release a young person under an order of probation, to stipulate that he or she shall join some recognized organization. Now, I am not suggesting that here is the answer to our problem of how to get more young members into Toc H! But I do wonder whether we could not sometimes, where the Branch is suitable and well-balanced, take on such a young person and see what fellowship of that sort could do for her. (In this case I am necessarily speaking of girls.) Among other things, it could give her what might be her first experience of unselfish service, as she learnt to take her part in the activities of the Branch and in its jobs.

Lastly, in what ways can we help in the religious education of young people? This may seem to you to be suddenly changing the subject, but I do not think it is. I think it is at the bottom of all the rest. Surely we do realize that unless and until the atmosphere and the climate in which these young people grow up is Christian, the children of our land will not grow up into Christian individuals. How can they?

Well, what can we do about it? If religious education is interpreted to mean, as it ought, not only definite instruction in the Christian faith, but in the widest sense that kind of education which seeks to bring the *whole* of life into its right relation with God and our fellow-men—then there is much that we can do. Most of us have some form of contact with young people and we should try to enable them to see the Christian faith in the widest sense, not as a particular brand of thought at Sunday School and in Churches, but as something to do with the whole of life.

Above all, it seems to me we must realize that these children are not a class apart, a class of untouchables, or outcasts; they are our children and they are our responsibility; they are the lambs of that Good Shepherd who rejoices with his friends when one that has gone astray is brought safely home.

* * * *

MR. MORLEY JACOB

Referring to some Home Office figures showing that the number of boys and girls under 17 who have been found guilty of serious crimes rose from 28,116 in 1938 to 47,473 in 1951, Mr. Morley Jacob said it was not surprising that there was much anxiety and alarm among the general public on this matter. Popular explanations of the situation were not lacking: bad and

inadequate housing, too few playing fields, mothers going out to work, football pools, films, breakdown of family life, falling off of religious standards.

There is some evidence to support all these factors but why has juvenile crime increased in England when in some European countries equally affected by the war it has not? The Welfare State has gone far to abolish the extreme forms of poverty and to reach full employment; the housing shortage is being slowly overcome; and yet crime does not significantly diminish. Indeed some authorities have pointed to the achievements of the Welfare State as one of the many causes of the trouble. They say the State has come to be regarded as a universal provider, and the young grow up to think that all things are available to them for the asking or the taking.

Popular remedies too have been suggested. It is said that the magistrates are too sentimental and that stronger measures are needed, but this in my opinion is not so. It is not so easy as that. There is no panacea for juvenile crime because cases differ with each offender and each must be dealt with individually, having regard to all the circumstances.

There are some places in London—for instance the Elephant and Castle, Soho, and Hoxton—where there is a great deal of crime among the population as a whole; they have been black spots for a long while. I used to try and do some boys' club work in Hoxton. They were delightful youngsters and lived in streets where in every house there was at least one criminal. What was the effect on Tommy of his father being a burglar? If father is a burglar or mother a prostitute you must not expect a boy or girl to see anything wrong in these things. But adults in all classes of society do things nowadays that they would have scorned years ago. Consider for example the attitude of most people to the Customs authorities. That attitude is affecting standards generally and it is hard to make youngsters feel that crime doesn't pay.

To do this—to convince the young offender that crime doesn't pay—is part of our object, and we try to show them in a very forcible form. The detention centre may suit some cases. Only one has so far been established, near Oxford, for boys between 14 and 17. There will be others for young people under 21. It is a place where short training periods of highly disciplined living are given; things are done at the double and to order. It is strict but not harsh, and is a place to which the boys do not want to return. So far it appears to be successful.

Some crime is due to physical causes. Sleeping sickness may change a person's whole character; congenital syphilis damages brain cells, and so on. Much can be done in these cases by various forms of treatment. Then there is mental defect as distinct from disease. It has been said that 26 per cent. of the

population is below average intelligence. It does not necessarily follow of course that they will all become criminals, but some do not appreciate the significance of their actions and do not realise that what they are doing may be wrong.

Much has been said about the unsatisfactory home. It is the most potent cause of juvenile instability; the child has no security, no sense of belonging, and he has a tug-of-war going on in his affections. He lives in constant fear of what will happen if father or mother leaves home, of what will happen to mother if father loses his temper again, and so on.

The child's reactions depend on his personality. If he is bright, intelligent and virile he will put on a façade of 'don't care' and an appearance of toughness to disguise his inner feelings of insecurity. He rebels against authority and all his moral judgments are on the side of rebellion. He will invite punishment and feel all the better for it. The one thing you must *not* give to a child of this type is corporal punishment.

The child who is not so bright and virile will become psychoneurotic. He will run away from reality to live in a world of make-believe. He will get into trouble by his irrational behaviour and from this group derive drug addicts, perverts, alcoholics and so on.

Now as to what Toc H can do about all this: First, one of the important things is to preserve the voluntary principle and religious influence in all remedial work. It is our responsibility to see that suitable candidates are forthcoming from among Christian people to staff the Probation Service, the Children's Care Service, the Approved Schools Service, the Prison Service and the Borstal Service.

Second, there is education in regard to family life. Many young people do not have any education for the most difficult job in the world, that of becoming parents.

Thirdly, you may consider how far you could help in regard to individual delinquents. It is not everybody's job. It does not depend just on goodwill, but many youngsters could benefit from an adopted 'uncle' or 'aunt'. If you think you could help in this way get into touch with the local probation officer or children's officer.

Fourth, assistance could be given in research. This is now all being done by Departments of Sociology in Universities, but Christian people have an experience which sociologists have not.

Fifth, Toc H could provide inspiration and give a lead. Consider the work of Elizabeth Fry and the founders of the London Police Court Mission. It is still necessary for Christian voluntary bodies to fulfil this rôle.

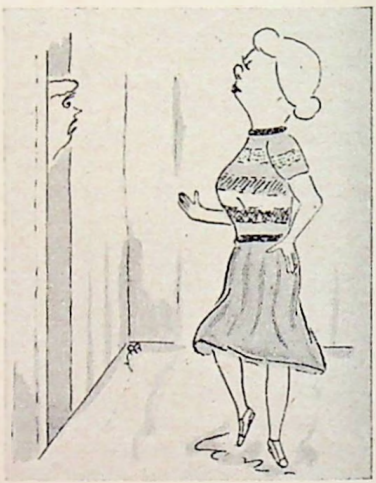
Any members who are interested in this work should, as a first step, get into touch with a member of staff for their locality—either Toc H or the Women's Association. ED.

Mabsnorton At Home

WE HAVE all been settling down nicely now that the fuss of the A.G.M. is over. Our new Chairman is fast growing that same harrassed look that Mab used to wear. Our Secretary gets just as worried as our old one did, when no one takes any notice of her agenda. We may as well admit it, this is not the Secretary we elected. We had chosen Billy but when she got home the full horror of her position dawned on her. By next Monday she had talked Tiny into taking over.

We also sadly find that all Treasurers are the same. However endearing they were before, once elected they turn into inveterate gold-diggers. In fairness it must be said, most of us hardly realise all the worries they suffer.

Take this matter of holidays. What do the cautious ones do with the cash whilst away? Probably some stick it in the Bank. But not Sylvia. She had it all in a wee tin, and as she packed their cases she had looked speculatively round the house for a really safe hiding place. All her own money she left lying around as usual, and on her return it was just where she had left it. But by that time she had quite forgotten where our hoard was. She seems to have remembered all the places she might have put it in but did not. It isn't under the dressing-table, in her husband's Wellingtons, on top of the cistern, in the tea caddy, nor in the coal box. Herbert is sure it was not among the ashes after their Friday bath, and she had up the stair carpet only this



morning. She keeps telling us we are in the red and now we have no money either.

Our agenda was upset too by Vicky's new football jersey. She had had an ounce or two of wool over in green and biscuit, so bought some magenta to liven it up, and had made herself an up-to-date striped affair that fairly knocked one for six. As we straggled in, it hit each of us individually and by the time she had pirouetted round for each new arrival to see it in all its glory our speaker for the evening was looking quite anxious, no doubt wondering if we should ever get round to him.

Once the usual business was disposed of said Mavis, 'Shall we have tea or our Speaker first?' Amid the cries of 'Tea' Tiny was heard reassuring the poor man. 'Oh you can talk as long as you like; we all go home at ten though.' GEE.

You Should Read . . .

A BOOK, like a landscape, is a state of consciousness varying with readers. There exists some book, pamphlet, article in an encyclopaedia, or possibly old clipping from a newspaper that once set you thinking; there may be many; indeed you may be one of those rare beings with whom a few lines of print are food enough for thought because, as Lamartine says, their thoughts think themselves. The something evocative for you may be poetry, history, philosophy, the sciences, or moral sciences, *i.e.*, the progress of mankind. Some people who go to sleep over a volume will be interested by a review which they think more condensed or better within their reach. Read reviews if they help you to think, that is to say if they leave in your mind images that will go on living when you have forgotten where they came from; read a Shakespeare calendar at the rate of four lines a day, if Shakespeare quotations have on you the magic influence they have on some people; read the lives of great inventors or of great business men, read *that* kind of book which you and nobody else know to be thought-productive for you.

. . . Nobody can think our thoughts for us, and nobody can tell us what will act as dew or sun on our thinking. The book that makes us think is the book we cannot shut again after we have read one page, because what it says starts us irresistibly questioning, contradicting or supplementing. No titles, no categories can be given to you by anybody but yourself.

from *The Art of Thinking.*
by ERNEST DIMNET.

Toc H Family Album

FAMILY albums have two endearing virtues; they reveal us in outgrown and half-forgotten phases, which we recognise with shocked surprise as being indeed ourselves; and they knit up the pattern of our family relationships. There in our background we see Great Aunt Mary, possibly in a cartwheel hat, and Gran'pa's Uncle Tom in his toddling days, in petticoats and corkscrew curls—all the folk who have lent some hand to our shaping, be it only in the capacity of legendary characters.

The latest book from Francis Street does just this for our Family of Toc H, and it is difficult to imagine a more roundly satisfying picture of our life than it affords. Never again need members be harried by that question whose almost standard answer has been, 'Well, it's rather difficult to explain'. The Toc H Family Album will in future explain it for us, absorbingly, amusingly and, despite its own disclaimer, we think completely.

It shows us every aspect of Toc H—its past, its present and what may come to be its future; its birthplace and the new homes to which it has migrated round the globe. Its work and hopes in all these places are recounted, in each case by people on the spot; its successes are noted with the humility we should expect, its failures with sympathy and without discouragement.

The Women's Association has an article to itself, and whether or not we go down to fame for the gifts we think should establish us in the scheme of things, it is nice to know we have already made our mark by our habit of changing our name.

The domestic economy of the Family has not been overlooked; the staff, the Builders scheme, the Marks, the mysteries of the budget ('The joke about financial questions generally speaking is that nobody knows the technical answers to them. If somebody will start giving the moral answers we may get somewhere')—we are introduced to them all.

Many well-known Toc H personalities have contributed to the Album and have decorated the flyleaf with their signatures. Some of their portraits will be found there, and a few lines on the life and work of each. Many other interesting photographs, of Toc H at work in varied settings, complete a book which should be possessed by every branch and read by every member. 'Here', as we read in the Foreword, 'there is neither a sentimental journeying into the "goode olde dayes" nor a brushing away of the dust of near-history, for this Family of ours is still a fledgling one with scarcely more than thirty years behind it and a rich future still to unfold.'

Toc H Family Album may be obtained from Toc H Headquarters, 47 Francis Street, Westminster, price 4s. (paper boards, postage 3d.); 7s. 6d. (cloth bound, postage 4d.). D.L.

I Believed

By Douglas Hyde

The Autobiography of a former British Communist.

HERE is a book which I should like everyone to read. It shocked me—not because of tales of torture or of concentration camps. There is nothing like that—but it gives a picture of how communism has been working in our midst with a cold thoroughness which is frightening. Having read 'I Believed' one can easily recognise a good deal of what has been done in recent years to foster discontent and encourage disputes.

The author was brought up a Methodist, but failing to find then in organised religion sufficient outlet for his enthusiasms, he got caught up in Communism. He spent many years working wholeheartedly for this cause and became News Editor of the *Daily Worker*. How he finally saw the evils in this creed and resigned from both the job and the Party to become a member of the Roman Catholic Church, makes fascinating reading. Let me quote from a closing chapter of Mr. Hyde's book.

> '. . . I most certainly believe that there is magnificent material in the Party's ranks, that communist atheists often put to shame by their energy and devotion those who possess a faith which has the only real and lasting answers to our problems.
>
> When I look back on the people who were for so many years my comrades and friends, I know that among them were some who were super-careerists, some who were bad, who came to communism because they were bad and were attracted by the bad that is in it. I know, too, that the majority would make magnificent Christians if once they were given a better cause in which to believe. And I am certain that millions more could be prevented from ever joining the communists' ranks if they were made more aware of something superior, something able to make even greater demands on them, claiming the whole man and using him for noble instead of ignoble ends.'

Heinemann, 10s. 6*d*.

MARY EVANS.

'RUTS'

'Keep out of the rut. Keep out of the rut'
Trills the chaffinch's dull refrain.
'Roll in it I must', say wagon wheels,
'It leads to my home again.
'Tis a straight road, if a dull road,
Which I have known before;
I can't go wrong if I follow along
The rut that is deep and sure.'

' 'Tis a lonely way and the walls are high
To black out one's fellow men'
Says Beetle Bert as he crawls in the dirt
'You share not their joy and sin.
The road may be safe and may reach the gate
Of the Heavenly Life to come.
If I journey alone and know none there,
Then no-one will call me Home.'

'We go by the rut, but not alone,'
Cry Albert and Annie Ant;
'There's a happy throng of us bustling along,
We sing as we struggle and pant.
We've no time for the "Whys" and "Wants"
Of folks outside our sphere,
We must work, work, work and not look around
Or lost we'll be, it's clear'.

'Oh foolish, foolish crawling ones
That have not grown your wings,
If you cannot fly take a leap to see
A vision of brighter things.
Come out of your ruts and know the world
To share its joy and pain;
For your rut is so deep you will pass right by
The goal that you would gain.

'Fear not the dangers of new strange sights
Or fresh travellers by your side;
Put but your trust in the Heavens above
And God will be your Guide.'
So sang the lark to the beetles and ants
As he pitied their narrow way.
'But we are snug, and safe, and sure—
We stick to our rut'—said they.

E.J.H.

News From Mac

Canberra June 9th, 1953

HERE I AM in that unique Australian invention, a capital city being made to order. It is set in lovely surroundings and this morning there was a thick frost on the ground. I am sitting as close as I can to a radiator and one side of me at least is warm; the other side still feels frozen. Outside the sun shines brightly and soon its warmth will pervade the atmosphere.

Today I am to explore the city, which has some of the unreality of a story book and no sign of the stern struggles for life which one usually connects with a capital. It has a spaciousness (room is allowed for the conjectured growth of a hundred years or more) which may be serene and enlarging or, might it be—just empty?

I have already written something of New South Wales, and of two of the very good jobs they are doing—the Sydney Children's Library and the hostel for girls who come from unhappy homes. I went from the crowds and bustle of Sydney to Queensland—a more leisurely scene, warmer in climate and happy-go-lucky in ways. The great event while I was there was the big Toc H Conference and Festival, which went on for a whole week. Members were there from all the Australian States, though naturally few could undertake the long journey and great expense involved in coming from Western and South Australia. We stayed at a seaside resort called Redcliffe, where there was good bathing, and lived in a permanent youth camp. It was a charming camp, full of happy fellowship, and there was something idyllic about taking your shower under the stars, though on the whole I prefer the good old tub in which you can sit down!

The theme of the week was 'Toc H and Youth' and it was discussed from every possible angle. The main conclusion at the end was that priority must be given to setting our own house in order. Besides the discussions, which took place on the lawn, and the sea-bathing, there were various expeditions, special talks and music in the evenings, and a sumptuous mayoral tea-party. This was the special 'Welcome to Redcliffe' on the first afternoon, and in the evening Sir John Lavarack came and specially opened the Conference. Then there was the game of cricket which was played on the last afternoon (my skin still shows where it was mistaken for the wicket—no, it was NOT L.B.W.!).

The week-end ended with the Festival Guestnight, held in Brisbane, when there were musical items, a talk from me and a real speech from the Hon. Commissioner for Australia, Brigadier Fred Chilton; and finally a procession of Lamps and banners belonging to both sides of the Family, and a very impressive Ceremony of Light. On Sunday afternoon we dispersed, after a

Service of thanksgiving and rededication, held in Redcliffe, at which Padre Bob Ballard preached.

What is Queensland like? I only saw a bit of it, of course, but that little charmed and drew me. The country round Brisbane itself is called the 'Salad Bowl of Queensland' and is full of delicious fruits and vegetables. The Darling Downs, with their fertile soil and crops, are high and invigorating, with their cold nights and hot sunny days. The sugar farms around MacKay, the Barrier Reef with its tinted coral and gaily coloured fish (seen, alas, in unpropitious weather conditions), the Bush and (at last) a *wild* kangaroo; the old original homesteads and the descendants of the original pioneering families, the friends I found—some day I must know more of them, for they tell the story of the great adventure of the building of Australia.

The bond between us all in the Commonwealth was clearly to be seen on Coronation Day. We were with you in London on that day, and though our celebration began many hours before yours, there was hardly anyone who didn't tune in to the B.B.C. at 7.15 p.m. to follow the events which were taking place so far away, and to join in the prayers and dedication which were centred in the Abbey of Westminster.

MAC.

Round the Family

HONOURS. We offer our congratulations to Miss Dorothy Double, a member of Stowmarket Branch; Miss Margaret Henry of Santiago (Chile) Branch; and Miss A. M. Pleasants, a probationary member of Ipswich Branch, all of whom have been awarded the M.B.E.

Miss Double has performed wonderful work as Assistant Supervisor at Stowmarket telephone exchange; Miss Pleasants has collected £28,879 for National Savings since 1940, and Miss Henry has given loyal service to the British Embassy in Chile for the last twenty years.

THANKS. We should like to take this opportunity of thanking Miss Lou Pizey, a member from Subiaco, Australia, who drew the attractive decorations for the articles entitled "Industry and the Christian" which appeared in the July Log, and which inadvertently were not acknowledged in that issue.

ACTION. Weymouth Branch, having held a discussion on various aspects of local public affairs, including the matter of a comunity centre, wrote to their Town Council requesting answers to certain questions. They are to be congratulated on this practical sequel to their discussion. Small Heath (Birmingham) are also to be congratulated on their letter to the local press giving a warm invitation to local residents, with full and clear details of their whereabouts.

RADIPOLE DESERVEDLY WON FIRST PRIZE

NEWENT ALSO COLLECTED FIRST PRIZE

ALFRETON LORRY OUTSIDE THEIR H.Q.

CORONATION PROCESSIONS.

Several branches have sent accounts and photographs of the Toc H displays, and we are glad to reproduce them here. For Newent the men made a large lamp from plywood and painted it a dull gold, mounting it on a globe. This was placed on a stand and the ladies tied orange and black streamers to the lamp. A large poster was placed in front, and members dressed in various national costumes walked each side of the stand, representing the universality of Toc H. This production was awarded first prize, and the photograph was taken by the Gloucester Journal, to whom we are indebted for permission to reproduce it.

The Radipole display was also awarded first prize in their locality. All the overseas Branches were "flagged" on the lorry, but there was only room for personal representation of Malaya, Hong Kong, Belgium and Brazil, in support of Britannia. The civilian and three Forces boys were intended to express Toc H's encouragement of youth. A large photograph of the Queen was placed over the cab of the lorry. The two smaller photographs are of Alfreton (Derbyshire) and Bingham displays. The former was taken outside the cottage which is their Toc H room.

East Kirkby held a Coronation Eve Service which was attended by about 50 people. They gave the collection to the church which kindly lent the room.

BINGHAM TOC H LORRY

REMEMBRANCE DAY. We received from Richmond Branch a cheerful account of the Ex-Service Parade organised by the British Legion last year, in which Vi Neale (ex-WAAF), Joan Chamberlain (ex-WRNS) and Eleanor Child (ex-WAAF, of E.C.

and Tower Hill Branch) took part. There is unfortunately no space in this issue to reproduce it, but we are asked to say that any ex-Service members interested in attending the Remembrance Day Service this year are invited to send their names and addresses as early as possible, with details of the Services to which they belonged, to Miss Vi. Neale, whose address is 19 Mayfair Avenue, Whitton, Middlesex.

NEWS AND NOTES

CHRISTMAS CARD. We have decided to sell a special Christmas Card for the Women's Association this year and have been very fortunate in getting L. Margaret Hine to make a most delightful design for it. The card will measure $3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4\frac{1}{2}''$ and be printed in three colours—it is reproduced in miniature here in black and white. It will be sold for 4d. with envelope to fit.

OVERSEAS SECRETARY. It has already been announced that Miss Elsa Perrin is to take over the London Region as Regional Secretary in September. The Central Executive Committee has appointed Mrs. David Worth as Overseas Secretary in a part-time capacity. Mrs. Worth, formerly Miss Elisabeth Hildesley, was at one time Acting General Secretary. We are delighted to welcome her back to the Staff.

HINTS FOR BRANCH SECRETARIES. A leaflet giving hints to Branch Secretaries is now available—price 2d. from Crutched Friars House. This sets out in short the many points which can so easily be forgotten by a busy Secretary. Send for one and keep it handy during your time in office.

BRANCH ACCOUNT FORMS. Branch Treasurers can now buy printed forms to use for presenting the Branch Annual Statement of Accounts. All they need do is fill in the appropriate figures. These forms may be had from Crutched Friars House, price 2d. each.

TOC H DIARIES FOR 1954. These are published by Toc H and can only be obtained from Toc H Headquarters, 47 Francis Street, London, S.W.1. They will be ready for dispatch about

the end of October but orders can be placed beforehand. Only firm orders can be taken—there will be no 'sale or return' basis. Money must be enclosed with the order. This year the quality of the cover is improved and the price is 3s. 6d. without pencil, 4s. with pencil. *Please note* that Crutched Friars House cannot handle any orders for Diaries.

SPECIAL EFFORTS. Amounts received from Special Efforts for the first six months of this year show a very big decrease compared with last year. We realise that many Branches have been too busy with Coronation Celebrations and Flood Relief Funds to hold Special Efforts for our own funds in the earlier part of the year, but we do rely on these efforts to help us balance our accounts. When Branches send in money from Special Efforts will they please send it direct to Headquarters and not through District or Area Treasurers, and will they also be certain to say that it is the result of a Special Effort. We should like to know what form the 'effort' took.

THE BATH

THE POND is slimy and smelly; a real dhobi* pond, green and foul. When the rains come it will be cleaner—and fresh for a week or two—but now, half empty and well used, it looks revolting, smells worse.

It is a scene of great activity, however. The sun is high in the heavens, and though the foul-smelling water is probably quite hot, it presents a coolness not found in the squalid kadjun huts nearby.

Many men and women are here, with yelling children and laughing boys. Dogs bark and their noise mingles with the tuneless songs of the dhobi men as they work.

Some are washing clothes. They dip the garment in the water, soap it rather haphazardly, then roll it up and bang it on a stone. When it has been banged to pieces, or the washerman is tired, it is redipped in the water, wrung out, and spread on the ground to dry.

After he has washed his clothes, the washerman baths himself. Wearing a G-string, he goes into the pond, soaps himself from head to foot, then splashes it off. By the time he has finished this bath his clothes are dry,—so he wraps his sarong around his waist, combs his hair, and goes away a new man!!

Milady's bath is a more decorous affair. She wraps a voluminously shapeless cotton garment around herself and ties it at the neck. Under this tent, she washes herself, performing unbelievable exercises to be clean! After the bath—the ritual of the hair. She sits, whilst her hair is combed, oiled and deloused. This operation is performed by a sister or mother, and may take one or two hours if her hair is long and thick.

On the other side of the pond, a man washes his bullock. The beast stands belly-deep in the water whilst he is scrubbed. The dogs run in and out of the pond with the children; the children play, laughing and splashing in the green water. Around the water's edge sit fat brown babies and round-eyed toddlers, watching the elders.

And all around the pond, the dhobi is spread to dry in the hot sun.

VIVIEN SHAVE.
(A member from Ceylon).

* Washing.

DOLLARBEG WEEK-END

DOLLARBEG, now a W.T.A. guest house, makes a delightful retreat for a pleasant week-end. It is a large country manor built in gothic style, and somehow for most of us there is always a certain added charm about staying in a house with turrets and a tower; perhaps it's an echo of fairy tales.

Saturday, May 9th was a lovely warm day; a day when the countryside really looks like the travel posters in the railway stations. Twelve of us, the first contingent of the Training Weekend, got off the bus at Dollar, and bundled ourselves into two taxis that took us the couple of miles up the hillside to Dollarbeg.

It was to be my first experience of a Training Week-end, and though I had been in Toc H long enough to know that 'It is all done by kindness' as they say of the performing seals, I was a little apprehensive.

After a refreshing cup of tea we lay back on the lawn, brought out our sun glasses, and felt quite 'native' by the time the second half of the party arrived.

In the evening Miss Frances Beeton, our new Regional Secretary, told us of the contacts she had made so far with other branches. This was the first time that most of us had met Miss Beeton, and while we were all interested in hearing news of our fellow members we were also delighted with the portrait of her own character which she was unwittingly giving to us, and it is to be hoped that her fine sense of humour and persuasive leadership will find an appropriate response in us.

The conference proper started on Sunday morning, when, after a short service, Anne Dunbar gave all the branches a vigorous stir round and spooned us out in small portions of fours. Glasgow supplied the bulk of the mixture, but there was plenty of sugar and spice from Bonnybridge, Paisley, Nairn, Dunfermline and Glasgow Western.

The first session was devoted to 'The Member in the Branch', and Miss Beeton suggested we should consider the following questions:

(1) What are the points to aim at in training membership in Toc H?

(2) How soon would you expect the member to take responsibility?

(3) If you think the different aspects of a personality have different contributions to give to the branch, which aspects do you think are the most valuable?

In the discussion that followed I think the words which were repeated most often were 'friendship' and 'fellowship', or in a phrase 'the family feeling'. It was thought that we should aim at creating in our branches the type of atmosphere in which the probationer, or even the visitor, could find that very necessary sense of belonging—belonging to each other and to Toc H.

One way, in which it was suggested that such an atmosphere could be achieved was by giving as many people as possible a part to play at every meeting. Even so small a thing as attending to the switch during *Light* might serve as a very useful 'walking-on line' for a shy probationer or new member.

The duties of sponsorship were also stressed. Many felt that these duties were too lightly undertaken. While it was only natural that one of the sponsors should be a friend, it was desirable for the other sponsor to be a kind of encyclopaedia of all Toc H matters. But we were also reminded that the Branch itself was perhaps the best sponsor of all.

Fortified by our lunch we went on to think of 'The Member in the Community'.

(1) What is the reason for our service to the community?

(2) Are we as members justified in taking a course of action which might appear right to ourselves, but may injure the good name of our group?

(3) When is it wrong to serve other people?

Most of us felt that the urge to serve sprang from a desire, sometimes a barely conscious desire, to work out our Christian beliefs in our own lives: 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of God'.

We all went rather astray over the second question, but agreed that if everyone kept the second point of the compass in mind (to think fairly) probably nothing would go far wrong.

And finally over the problem of service being wrong, we decided that there were indeed such occasions. If, for instance, it meant robbing Peter to pay Paul or imposing our own ideas or personality on someone, or perhaps worst of all taking away a person's sense of independence.

In her summing up, Miss Beeton exhorted us all to practise our beliefs in our day-to-day living, and to be ever watchful for opportunities of Toc H extension, a cause we all knew had been very near to the heart of our late Regional Secretary, Miss Thomas.

Light and Prayers over, we wandered out into the sunshine. Quite suddenly I realised that the week-end was almost over and no one had once said 'Line-up' or 'You there in the blue dress'. This had certainly been Training without Tears!

SHEILA MACMILLAN.

STUDENT HARVEST

EACH YEAR since 1947 several hundred German students have come to Britain in the autumn to give much needed help with the potato and sugar beet harvest.

The students, aged between 20 and 25 years, and mostly men, are selected from universities, teacher training colleges, technical and agricultural colleges, as well as from schools of art and music in Western Germany. They have, in general, a working knowledge of English. During April all universities and colleges in the Federal German Republic, and Berlin, are notified about the Scheme, and applications are invited. The number of vacancies allotted to each college is calculated in proportion to the total number of students; practically everywhere there are far more applicants than can be accepted.

The students are allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture camps on the basis of camp lists received from London. The poorer students are usually sent to the camps with the best earning opportunities, chiefly those in counties where piece-work is the general rule. They can later transfer their savings to Germany if they wish. Care is also taken that there are students from several different universities at each camp. Travel to London is then arranged by 'German Educational Reconstruction' (known as G.E.R.—a society for promoting Anglo-German educational relations).

The Camps

Last year the students were distributed over 35 camps, the majority in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, but some in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, one in Lancashire and one in Bedfordshire. The number of students at any one camp varied from 10 to 40. In some the German contingent was larger than any other national group, in others there was a more equal balance with parties of Scandinavian, French, British and other volunteers.

On the whole, the students were agreeably surprised by the conditions in the camps and especially to find television in several. Many of the wardens seemed to go out of their way to make the students happy, to arrange social evenings in the camp and introductions outside it. One student has written since his return home to say how surprised he was at the warm welcome given to them by the warden and farmers after all

he had heard about English coolness and reserve! Another was surprised at the trouble taken over individuals in his large camp, though the cooking quite often left much to be desired and it took the students some time to get used to the English style.

The students were asked to elect one of their number as camp leader. For the first time several camps elected a girl student for this job. The leaders were asked to send weekly reports to the Liaison Office, which had been set up at 43 Parliament Street, Westminster, and in one or two camps the leader asked a different student to write the report each week.

Work

With the exception of the first week or two when it rained heavily in Northern England, the weather was generally good and work plentiful. Most of the students were engaged on lifting potatoes but a few gathered fruit (in Berkshire) and some helped with threshing. Those who stayed in camp until well on in November lifted sugar beet. The earnings varied from district to district and were highest in Lincolnshire, where piece-work is the rule. On an average the earnings were about £1 a day, out of which the students repaid the £1 which had been lent to them on arrival, and paid 37/6d. a week (27/6d. after the beginning of October) for board and lodging at the camp.

Education

All but three camps had a series of organised lectures, and when these were followed by questions and discussion the lecturers found the audience eager to exchange ideas. The series of lectures which appeared to be the most successful was that covering the following subjects: *The British Way of Life (Introduction); British Law and the Constitution; British Parties and Politics; Social Security in Britain; Education in Britain; The British Way of Life (Postscript).*

Many of the students were training to be teachers and were therefore interested to see the educational system in Britain in operation; others were students of medicine, veterinary surgery, law, etc., and each was anxious to see a practical demonstration of how his or her chosen profession functioned in Britain.

In Nottinghamshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire, the university authorities made themselves responsible for lectures, while the Local Education Authorities organized visits to schools, churches, local clubs, party political organisations, Farmers' Unions, Women's Institutes, and other places of interest to the students.

Under the auspices of the East Riding Education Authority, the Driffield Youth Committee arranged a comprehensive programme for the students in Cottam Camp. Invitations were

issued to visit the youth club in the area, and a special evening of dancing, games and folk songs was arranged. The drama and social club entertained the students, and an open invitation was given to visit the club on normal club nights. Special arrangements were also made for individual students to visit places of interest and people connected with their branch of studies. For example, a student of banking visited a bank and was entertained by the manager; medical students visited the East Riding General Hospital; students training to be teachers saw various types of schools in the district, and in addition all the students were invited to private homes.

In Nottingham a visit to the university and to the students' German Society was arranged as were visits to a colliery, a textile factory and several special schools.

In one camp the students were invited to attend cookery classes arranged by the local Women's Institute. The classes were popular and an added attraction seems to have been the instructress! Where the camps were situated near a university town, a visit was generally organised by the university authorities, and student bodies entertained the German students and showed them round.

Outings to places of interest were also organised in some of the camps by the wardens, and in one case the students themselves arranged a weekend trip to Stratford-on-Avon, including a visit to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. Many of the students spent weekends 'hitch-hiking' to various parts of the country.

HOSPITALITY

One of the features which distinguishes G.E.R.'s Harvest Scheme from others, and to which real importance is attached, is the hospitality afforded to students by British families. Not all the students are given sufficiently long leave of absence by their universities to be able to accept such an invitation, but of those who can remain in England after leaving camp, the majority spent at least a week—some as long as four weeks—in a private home.

The Student Harvest Scheme will again be in action this year.

Offers of one or more weeks' hospitality will be welcomed for the period between the beginning of November and the middle of December, but more particularly during the first half of November. They should be addressed in the first instance to: The Secretary, G.E.R., 41/43 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

The students will be asked to make, where necessary, a contribution of up to £1 per week for hosts' out-of-pocket expenses but, since many of the students depend on their earnings for their next term's expenses, it is hoped that hospitality will again be given free wherever possible, the students providing only their own pocket money.

NEW TOYS FROM OLD

Do you remember waking very early on Christmas Morning when you were young, and scrambling excitedly towards the end of your bed to feel, in the half-light whether your stocking had been filled with gifts during the night? Or, if you have children of your own, have you not heard the scuffling and the muffled squeaks of delight as they discovered the presents which you had put there?

What an immense amount of pleasure for both the children and the parents—but can you imagine what it must be like for the children who crawl over the bed-clothes only to find the stocking limp and empty, or for the parents who know that they cannot hope to afford presents for their families?

A year or two ago, Toc H Richmond (Surrey) Branch organized a collection of old toys, and members of the Women's Section (as it then was) helped them. In 1952, however, the men decided that they were unable to repeat the job. The Women's Association Branch thought of those empty stockings and could not resist the challenge.

Early in the autumn a letter was sent to the Editor of the local paper asking for cast-off toys, and when cards were received in reply, one of the members would call to collect the gifts. A small car came in useful here, particularly when tricycles and dolls' cots were amongst the offerings.

'Jobbie' organized our Work Nights well, and before long everyone was busy mending woolly animals, dressing dolls, painting tricycles and sorting out the accumulating pile of toys. There was plenty of 'homework' for all. Collections were made at one or two schools, and the task of repair and renovation grew weekly. Jigsaw puzzles were fitted together and missing pieces were made from cardboard. India rubbers were worn down in efforts to clean from books the former owner's scribblings. Cellotape proved the answer to many a book-mender's prayer, and plain soap and water worked wonders with rubber and plastic toys. When we were really defeated, by a few of the broken mechanical toys, husbands, fathers and Toc H friends were called upon for assistance and gave it willingly.

A small number of the toys were, of course, beyond redemption, having been turned out by folk who seemed to think, perhaps not without some justification, that Toc H W.A. can work miracles!

When the evening came, shortly before Christmas for getting together the results of our labours, the Branch meeting-place looked just like Santa Claus's store cupboard. Toys of every description large and small, cuddly and constructive, were piled high upon the tables all round the room.

RICHMOND MEMBERS AT WORK, PACKING THE TOYS

Four destinations had been chosen for the toys, the aim being to give to small homes or organizations which were not in the public eye, and consequently were less likely to receive many gifts. They were: The Family Welfare Association, Rushey Green, S.E.6; The Canal Boatmen's Institute (City Mission) Brentford, Middlesex; The N.S.P.C.C. Richmond via the local Inspector; and The British Legion Children's Home, Richmond.

Four heaps were formed and the contents of each were packed as far as possible into cardboard cartons. Two cars were used, one delivering to Rushey Green and the other to the three addresses nearer at hand. It is astounding how much can be packed into an Austin Seven, particularly if one of the front seats is removed!

It was hard work lasting several months and could not have been so successfully undertaken without the devotion of 'Jobbie' and the co-operation of all the Branch Members but, my goodness, it was worth it!

JOAN CHAMBERLAIN.

International Conference at Poperinghe

JUNE 19th was a red letter day for a small group of people who gathered at Victoria station in time for the 10 a.m. train for Brussels. It was our turn to make a Pilgrimage to the Old House, and quite apart from the fact that for Toc H folk this must always be a very special occasion we were, perhaps, an especially interesting assortment; for between us we could talk first-hand of Toc H in Australia, Pakistan, South Africa and Great Britain, and by the time we returned we had also heard, first-hand, of Toc H in Belgium and Holland.

The Channel crossing provoked no great excitement in those who hailed from across vast oceans, and we were eager to reach our first goal—Bruges. We spent an evening and the following morning in this lovely old city with its canals, ancient buildings, its Cathedral, the Church of Notre Dame and the Basilica of the Holy Blood. With Elsa Perrin as an enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide we can have missed little. Was it her enthusiasm, I wonder, that led Elsa to get her room-mate up two hours ahead of schedule, or wasn't she taught to read the time?

On Saturday afternoon a private bus took us through Flanders to Poperinghe and the Old House. For a fleeting moment one hesitated to go in. It seemed necessary to crystallise this moment but the illusion was swiftly dispelled. This was no hallowed shrine. Instead we were ushered into a homely place that was very much alive, and although the sun was there to light the rooms one felt that they would retain their radiance on the coldest winter's day. The size of the House and the beautifully kept garden gave a momentary surprise.

Hastily we dumped luggage on the nearest bed, and in between greetings and introductions to the host and earlier arrivals we made a preliminary survey of the various relics so familiar to all readers of the 'Tales'. It was exciting to sign the visitor's book and to search the pages for familiar names. After being taken on a tour of the House we had dinner at Skindles just down the road, and then went to Ypres to see one of the war cemeteries and to hear the Last Post sounded, as it is every night, at the Menin Gate.

Sunday morning began with Communion in the Upper Room —an experience that touches each of us in our own way—then, after breakfast a tour of another war cemetery, and then a revealing get-together, when we exchanged Toc H news from our widely scattered countries. It is good to have these reminders that our members hail from far and wide, yet we remain essentially a real family. In the afternoon the energetic braved the heat and went off to have a closer look at Ypres, while the rest nattered at home—yes it WAS home. It was quite odd to be chattering to Madame Lefèvre from Brussels, who had a broad

Lancashire accent! Eventually another good meal at Skindles, followed by a sing-song and a session with Yvonne, who lives next door and can tell a good yarn about how the Germans came to Talbot House, but how the people of Poperinghe outwitted even their good organisation, and were able to hide our treasures in time.

All too soon it was time to say goodbye and to drive through France to Dunkirk, and there find an uncomfortable berth for the crossing to Dover. We slept soundly nevertheless and arrived in London in time for work if need be. AUDREY HARRISON.

Correspondence

STAFF

Dear Editor.

As an ordinary member I am wondering why it is considered necessary to ask for such academic qualifications in new Staff as have been set forth in a recent circular concerning the recruitment of new members of the Staff.

'The Powers that Be' must have their reasons, some of which are obvious to most of us—for instance the one that our Staff have to meet and talk with intellectuals as well as with those of us possessed of only average intelligence. But—is it necessary for *ALL* our new Staff to possess such qualifications? Would it not be better to engage one or two such folk and use them only in 'key' positions to organise on a wide scale, to lecture, to talk at Guest Nights, to teach and to train? For the rest why not invite applications from the more average business girl (many of whom would probably make considerable sacrifice to serve our Movement) whose salary requirements would not be likely to be in the region of the girl with a degree (who would be somewhat 'wasted' as a Regional Secretary in dealing with the very often small domestic matters of Branch life). Members who have graduated out of Branch officership into District, and Area offices, and who have sound commonsense, tact, patience, initiative, energy and enthusiasm allied with a faith deep enough to move mountains, could do much if they could be teamed up with our present Staff. At present much as many of such folks would like to help considerably more than at present, it is impossible to do so when occupied during the day on one's job of earning a living.

Our Regions are of such a size that Secretaries are almost killing themselves with vain endeavour to keep up with all that needs to be done. Much must be left undone and the struggle to put first things first must be terrific. So does it not seem more practical to aim for assistants to our present Regional Staff? To have a partner to share the responsibility of her

Region, someone with whom she could discuss the storms in a teacup which arise as well as the larger issues of development would I am sure, not merely double the work at present underway, but probably treble it. It would be possible for her to leave her assistant behind in part of her region to see a lone new Unit get on its feet, whilst she herself sought for Area leaders.

Let us get our Staff as mixed as possible—rubbing shoulders with one another and contributing from their varied experience of life. Let us, by all means, have our real intellectuals if we can get them, but let us also have the more average person to help build our Movement. In Toc H the men Staff are as diverse in their origins as it is possible to be—it seems to work well amongst the men so why not in our Women's Association too?

Yours sincerely,

LOU TURNER.

THE BUS

Dear Editor,

I have read your 'Omnibus' letters with great interest, and it seems to me that many people are frightened by the word 'Church'. I certainly agree that no one should be 'compelled' to go to church, but I do think that Toc H should act as an impellant to church going.

There is no record that Jesus Christ compelled any of His followers to go to church, but He certainly went there Himself —very often in fact, not just once a week. He referred to it as His Father's house. I wonder if we should so carelessly talk of 'rarely going to church' if instead we had to say 'I rarely go to My Father's house'.

Let us not be deterred by the fact that some churches do not offer us the perfection we look for. In the time of Christ, the Temple was far from perfect—full of hypocrisy and evil pollution—but that did not keep Him away.

To my mind there are three reasons why a Christian should go to church: To give the honour and worship due to God; to show publicly our fellowship with other Christians, thus helping and strengthening each other (what would Toc H be like without our meetings?); and to gain spiritual instruction and health for ourselves—through prayer and the hearing and expounding of God's Holy Word.

Long ago I found an ideal way of spending Sunday is to go early in the morning to Holy Communion, and close the day with Evensong. It is worth giving it a trial.

Yours sincerely,

Kings Norton. A. E. MORGAN.

THE REGIONS

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THE LOG

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She will be glad to give further information.

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